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NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The attached note verbale, dated 4 November 1992, was addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations.

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Annex

[Original: French]

Note verbale dated 4 November 1992 from the Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note of 14 October in which he invites the Swiss Government to communicate to him information relating to the violations of humanitarian law, including grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, being committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

Switzerland is ready, in the spirit of Security Council resolutions 771 (1992) and 780 (1992), to cooperate closely with the investigations being carried out by the United Nations into violations of humanitarian law in the context of the Yugoslav conflict, in particular by communicating relevant information on the matter. It does not, however, have any information concerning evidence submitted personally by Swiss citizens regarding violations of international humanitarian law by the parties to the conflict. Swiss citizens involved in the operations of an international organization report directly to the organization in question; as, for example, in the case of the Swiss military observers attached to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR); or as in the case of the Swiss expert who, from 29 August to 4 September, participated in the CSCE mission to inspect places of detention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the report of which has been published. In the war zones, about 100 Swiss women delegates and personnel of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are carrying out their mission of protection and assistance. The evidence they provide is brought solely to the attention of ICRC, which alone decides on the use to which it is to be put, the protection of victims being accorded priority over any other consideration.

Switzerland is also ready to consider the possibility of acting as an intermediary in the event of persons who have left the war zones being present in Switzerland and wishing to communicate information to the United Nations. It is currently considering what procedures might be put in place to enable that goal to be achieved. In such circumstances, the interests of the victims still present in the conflict zones - in particular, prisoners - would need to be carefully safeguarded.